

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 240589

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

- ON: PROSPECTS FOR PACIFICATION

SARKIS' ASSUMPTION OF THE PRESIDENCY PROMPTS EMBASSY
BEIRUT TO ASSESS HIS PROSPECTS FOR PACIFYING LEBANON.
HIS ASSETS INCLUDE:

--WAR-WEARINESS ON BOTH SIDES;

--HIS PREVIOUS NEUTRAL STANDS, WHICH ANTAGONIZED
NONE OF THE MAJOR PARTICIPANTS; AND

--THE BACKING OF KEY ARAB COUNTRIES.

THE FORMIDABLE OBSTACLES SARKIS MUST OVERCOME ARE:

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--THE MIXED BLESSING OF SYRIAN SUPPORT;

--THE UNCOMPROMISING ATTITUDE OF BOTH THE MARONITES
AND THE PALESTINIANS; AND

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--THE RESETTLEMENT OUTSIDE LEBANON OF ONE QUARTER OF
THE POPULATION--THE PALESTINIANS.

IN THE EMBASSY'S VIEW, THE LEBANESE ARE CONVINCED THAT
THE US MUST PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE--BY PROVIDING ECONOMIC
ASSISTANCE AND DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT--IF SARKIS IS TO
DEVELOP SOME MOMENTUM TOWARD PEACE BEFORE OTHER, MILI-
TARILY STRONGER, ACTORS DECIDE TO TAKE MATTERS INTO THEIR
OWN HANDS. (CONFIDENTIAL) BEIRUT 7671, 9/27.

2. SYRIA: IMPLICATIONS OF FATAH TERRORIST ATTACK

EMBASSY DAMASCUS COMMENTS THAT THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF
THE SEMIRAMIS HOTEL INCIDENT ARE UNCERTAIN:

--THE REGIME'S READINESS TO PUBLICIZE THE GUERILLAS'
FATAH MEMBERSHIP MAY FUEL FURTHER DISCORD AND
SUSPICION BETWEEN DAMASCUS AND THE PALESTINIANS.

--ON THE OTHER HAND, BOTH SIDES MAY RETHINK THEIR
POLICIES IN LEBANON WHICH HAVE CAUSED THEIR RELATIONS
TO DETERIORATE SHARPLY.

--AS YET SYRIA HAS GIVEN NO INDICATION IT WILL USE
THE INCIDENT AS A PRETEXT TO BOYCOTT THE UPCOMING
ARAB SUMMIT.

THE EMBASSY ADDS THAT THE SWIFTNESS AND SEVERITY OF
SYRIAN JUSTICE REVEAL HOW ACUTELY EMBARRASSING THE
INCIDENT WAS TO A REGIME STILL UNACCUSTOMED TO HAVING
ITS LEFTIST CREDENTIALS QUESTIONED. (CONFIDENTIAL)
DAMASCUS 6491, 9/27.

3. SOVIET BLOC SNUBS EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR TO NEPAL CONFIDENTIAL

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EMBASSY KABUL REPORTS THAT, IN AN APPARENTLY CALCULATED
DISCOURTESY, NEITHER THE SOVIET NOR ANY EASTERN EUROPEAN
REPRESENTATIVE CAME TO SEE OFF THE DEPARTING DEAN OF THE
DIPLOMATIC CORPS, EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR ABOUZEID.
(CONFIDENTIAL) KABUL 7181, 9/27.

4. SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS: NO CHANGE IN SIGHT

TWO SENIOR FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS TOLD EMBASSY NEW DELHI THAT THE GOI DOES NOT EXPECT ANY MAJOR SHORT-TERM CHANGES IN SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS. FOR THE PRESENT, INDIA DOES NOT PLAN TO:

--RELAX TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS ON PRC DIPLOMATS;

--AUTHORIZE A NEW CHINA NEWS AGENCY CORRESPONDENT TO COME TO INDIA; OR

--ALTER CURRENT RESTRICTIONS ON TRADE WITH CHINA.
(CONFIDENTIAL) NEW DELHI 14241, 9/27.

5. ANGOLAN ACCESSION TO INTERNATIONAL COFFEE AGREEMENT
ACCEPTED

ON SEPTEMBER 27 THE COFFEE COUNCIL ACCEPTED WITHOUT A ROLL CALL VOTE ANGOLA'S ACCESSION TO THE INTERNATIONAL COFFEE AGREEMENT. PER INSTRUCTIONS, THE US DELEGATION ANNOUNCED IT WOULD HAVE ABSTAINED AND REQUESTED THAT THE US POSITION BE INCLUDED IN THE RECORD. (UNCLASSIFIED) LONDON 15328, 9/27.

6. COSTA RICA: GOVERNMENT MANEUVERING ON THE "VESCO LAW"

EMBASSY SAN JOSE NOTES THAT THE ATMOSPHERE FOR CHANGING THE "VESCO EXTRADITION LAW" IS MORE PROPITIOUS THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE ITS PASSAGE A YEAR AND A HALF AGO. THE REASONS FOR THIS CHANGE INCLUDE:

--THE RULING PLN'S NEED TO DEFLATE THE CORRUPTION
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ISSUE IN BOTH THE PARTY PRIMARY AND GENERAL ELECTIONS;

--PRESIDENT ODUBER'S GROWING CONVICTION THAT HE CAN ACT AGAINST VESCO WITHOUT ALIENATING FORMER PRESIDENT FIGUERES; AND

--COSTA RICAN DISGUST WITH THE IMAGE VESCO BRINGS TO THEIR COUNTRY.

SOME ELEMENTS IN THE GOVERNMENT MAY SEEK TO RELIEVE THE PLN OF THE ONUS OF THE VESCO LAW WITHOUT ACTUALLY ENDANGERING VESCO. ONE STRATEGY WOULD BE TO REMOVE VESCO'S PROTECTION ONLY A SHORT TIME BEFORE HE BECOMES ELIGIBLE FOR COSTA RICAN CITIZENSHIP, LEAVING THE US LITTLE TIME TO FILE AN EXTRADITION REQUEST. THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDS

THAT, IF WE ARE EVER TO CONVINCE THE COSTA RICANS THAT WE
HAVE BEEN SERIOUS ABOUT THE VESCO CASE, WE MUST BE
PREPARED TO MOVE ON SHORT NOTICE WITH A WELL-PREPARED
EXTRADITION REQUEST. (CONFIDENTIAL) SAN JOSE 4663, 9/27.
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